The River

When the Colorado Burst Its Banks and Flooded the Imperial Valley of California

By EDNAH AIKEN

RICKARD "GOES IN," AND AS HE GOES HE BEGINS TO APPRECIATE THE DIFFICULTIES OF HIS POSITION.

Synopsis.—K. C. Rickard, an engineer of the Overland Pacific railroad, is called to the office of President Marshall in Tuscon, Ariz. While waiting Rickard reads a report on the ravages of the Colorado river, despite the efforts of Thomas Hardin, head of the Desert Reclamation company. Hardin had been a student under Rickard in an eastern college and had married Gerty Holmes, with whom Rickard had fancied he was in love. Marshall tells Rickard the Overland Pacific must step in to save the Imperial valley and wishes to send Rickard to take charge. Rickard declines because he foresees embarrassment in supplanting Hardin, but is won over.

CHAPTER III.
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The Blessing of Aridity.

When Rickard left the main line at Imperial Junction the next afternoon his eyes followed the train he was deserting rather than the one that was to carry him to his new labors. He felt again the thrill of detachment that invariably preceded his entrance into a new country. With the pulling up of the porter's green-carpeted stool, the slamming of the train gates, the curtain fell on the Tucson set scene.

The long line of cars was pushing off with its linen-covered Pullmans and diners, steaming down grade toward the Sink, the depression which had been primeval sea, and then desert, and was now sea again. Old Beach, rechristened Imperial Junction for railroad convenience, was itself lower than the ancient sea line where once the gulf had reached. Rickard knew he could find shells at that desert station should he look for them. He picked up his bag that the porter had thrown on the ground and faced the rung-down curtain.

Its painted scene was a yellow station house broiling under a desert sun; a large water tank beyond, and in the distance the inevitable cardboard mountains, like property scene shifts, flat and thin in their unreal hues of burnished pink and purple. A dusty accommodation train was backing and switching, picking up the empty refrigerator cars to carry into the valley for the early melon growers.

Already the valley had asserted its industrial importance; the late rampage of the Colorado had made it spectacular. Those who would pay little attention to the opening of a new agricultural district in the heart of a dreaded desert opened their ears to the vagary of the river which had sportively made of a part of that desert an inland sea. Scientists were rushing their speculations into print; would the sea dwindle by evaporation, as it had done before? Or would the overflow maintain the paradoxical sea?

The flood signs were apparent. There cracks had split, the desert sand; here water fissures had menaced the track; and to the south a fringe of young willows hid the path of the Colorado's debouch.

The men crowding the platform wore the motley of the new country. In Tucson the uniform of the male citizens, with the exception of those reckless ones who found inevitably that lotus is a liquid, was the wilted pretense of a gentle civilization; despondent ducks and khakis and limp collars. Imperial Junction marked the downfall of the collar. The rest of the composite costume was irregular, badly laundered and torn, faded and sunburned; the clothes of the desert soldier. Rickard saw buttonless shirts, faded overalls, shabby hats—the sombrero of Mexico. The faces under the broad-brimmed hats made a leaping impression upon him of youth and eagerness. He noted a significant average of intelligence and alertness. This was not the indolent group of men which makes a pretense of occupation whenever a train comes in!

"Going in?" asked a voice at his ear. A pair of faded eyes set in a young-old face, whether early withered or well preserved he had not time to determine, was staring at him.

He assured his interlocutor that he was going in. His mood isolated the phrase; its significance vastly different from "going on."

"Buying?"

"I think not."

"It is a good time to buy." Rickard suspected a real estate agent. "For land is low—rock bottom prices on account of the uneasiness about the river. People are afraid. They want to see the company redeem some of its promises before they come in; and the company isn't in much of a hurry."

Rickard asked what company he referred to.

The young-old face with the faded eyes looked at him in surprise. "The D. R. company, Desert Reclamation, which brought us all here."

"Scamps?" The newcomer's survey of the long line of naked mountains and lean lands that formed the neck of the valley gave a snub of casualness to the question.

"No. Fools!". The answer was as swift as a bullet. "Though some people think them worse than that. I don't go so far; I'm willing to say they've tried. I'll say that much. But they haven't the know-how."

The window seats, Rickard could see, were filled before the cars halted, by the experienced ones who had not waited for the train to be made up. In the scramble he spied a vacant window on the sunny side and made for it. A stranger dropped into the seat beside him.

Every window in the car was open. Each red velveted, dusty seat was filled. A strong desert wind was blowing sand into their faces, discoloring the seats and covering the floor.

The engineer turned to his companion, who was coughing.

"Do you mind this window being open?"

"I'd mind if it were not. It's always bad at the Junction. When we get into the cultivated country you will see what the valley will be like when it is all planted. The wind is not bad when it blows over grain or alfalfa. It is the desert dust that nags one." He coughed again. "Going in?"

Rickard said he was going in.

"Are you going to settle in the valley?" The inquisitor was a man of about fifty, Rickard decided, with a desert tan of apparent health. His face was clear cut and intelligent.

"I don't know."

"Just looking the country over?"

"You might call it that."

"Go slow," admonished his companion. "Don't let yourself be carried away. It is a wonderful country. But go slow. It's the ones who expect to make millions the first year that become the worst knockers. Go slow, I always tell them. Go slow."

"It's not a good time to buy, then?"

"Not so good as it was ten years ago! But land is cheaper than it was a year back. In some districts you can buy a good farm for a ticket back home, the farmers are so discouraged. Cold feet." The slang sounded oddly somehow. The man's voice had the cultivated precision of the purist. "Cold feet. The river's chilled them. The valley's losing faith in the company."

"What company?" inquired Rickard again.

"There's but one company to the valley, the one that brought them here, the D. R. They don't call the railroad the company. They won't recognize that problem! It's had hard luck from the first, the D. R. At the very start the wrong man got hold of it. Sather, the first promoter, was a faker—a pretty thorough faker. The company reorganized, but it's been in bad odor with the public ever since."

Rickard's eyes left the deep cuts in the land made by the ravening waters and looked at his companion.

"I thought Estrada was the original promoter?" he inquired.

"Estrada's a recent comer—oh, you mean the general. He started the ball rolling; that was all. Bad health, following the Bliss complication, tied his hands."

The man in the seat ahead was listening. His head was leonine, his body shriveled. Rickard could see on the neck the ancient burns that had spared the magnificent head. The rest of the man had been shriveled and twisted into terrible deformity. Rickard found himself puzzling over the incident with its accompanying miracle. There was not a scar on the powerful face.

"Estrada's business methods were then not different from Sather's and Hardin's!" It was a deep, rich organ.

"Oh, you can't class Hardin with Sather," protested Rickard's companion. "Sather used Hardin. Hardin's honesty cannot be questioned. It's not money's he's after. His whole heart is in this reclamation scheme."

"Hardin's a false alarm," growled the owner of the massive head. "He makes promises. He never keeps them."

The older man's smile was tolerant. "Barton," he indicated, "is the president of the water companies. And if you want to hear about a rogue and a scoundrel ask the water companies their opinion of Hardin."

"Well, what sort of a hole has he got us into?" demanded the other with heat.

"Hardin's in a hole himself.

"No one seems to remember that he crucified himself to save the valley. I've a great respect for Thomas Hardin."

"Yes?" returned Rickard, whose liking had been captured by the speaker.

The impression of distinction sharpened. The stranger wore a laundered pongee silk shirt, open at the neck but

He Was "Going In."

restricted by a brown silk tie; and it was trimly belted. There were but two neckties in the entire car, and they occupied, Rickard observed, the same seat.

"The beginning of the canal system."

Rickard looked out upon a flat, one-toned country, marked off in rectangles by plows and scrapers. Farther south these rectangles were edged by young willows. He fancied he could see, even at that distance, the gleam of water.

It was the passing of the desert. A few miles back he had seen the desert in its primitive nakedness, which not even cactus relieved. He was passing over the land which man and horses were preparing for water. And he could see the land where water was.

"That was the way Riverside looked when I first saw it," commented the other man who wore a tie. "Come out on the rear platform. We can see better."

Rickard followed to the back of the dust-swept, stifling car. The glare on the platform was intense. He stood watching the newly made checkerboard of a country slip past him. Receding were the two lines of gleaming steel rails which connected and separated him from the world outside. He was "going in." Not in Mexico even had he such a feeling of ultimate remoteness. The mountains, converging perspectively toward the throat of the valley, looked elusive and unreal in their gauze draperies of rose and violet. The tender hour of day was clothing them with mystery, softening their sharp outlines. They curtained the world beyond. Rickard felt the suspense of the next act.

It was a torpid imagination, he thought, which would not quicken over this conquest of the desert. East of the tract men and teams were preparing the newly furrowed ground for the seed. The curved land knives were breaking up the rich mold into ridges of soft soil as uncohesive and feathery as pulverized chocolate. It was the dark color of the chocolate of commerce, this silt which had been pilfered from the states through which the vagrant river wandered. The smell of the upturned earth, sweetly damp, struck against his nostrils. Rickard indulged a minute of whimsical fancy; this was California territory over which his train was passing, but the soil, that dark earth those blades were crumbling, was it not the tribute of other states, of despoiling Wyoming, of ravishing Colorado and Arizona?

To the west new squares were being leveled and outlined. Shrubby rectangles were being cleared of their creosote bush and tough mesquite. Compared with other countries, the preparation for planting was the simplest. Horses were dragging over the ground a railroad rail bent into a V angle, which pulled the bushes by the roots and dragged them out of the way. Beyond, farther west, could be seen the untouched desert. The surface for many miles was cracked by water lines, broken and baked into irregular sand cakes; the mark of sand which has been imprisoned by water and branded by swift heat.

Close by men were putting in with care the seed that was to quicken the river silt. They were passing a square where the green tips of the grain were piercing the ground. Now they were abreast of a field of matured alfalfa over which the wind raced gratefully. Desert and grain field; death and life! The panorama embraced the whole cycle.

They went back to their seats. After a few minutes the other leaned over his shoulder, his hand waving toward the passing mountains. "Those are the Superstition mountains you can see over yonder. An unusually apt name."

"Yes?"

"Why is it good, you mean? That pile of dark rock stands as a monument to an effete superstition. It is the gravestone for a gigantic mistake. Why, it was only the grossest ignorance that gave to the desert the label of 'bad lands.' The desert is a condition, not a fact. Here you see the passing of the condition, the burial of the superstition. Are you interested in irrigation?"

Rickard was not given to explain the degree of interest his profession involved, for the stranger drew a painful breath, and went on.

"Of course you are, if you are a western man. You are, I think?"

The engineer said he was, by choice.

"Irrigation is the creed of the West. Gold brought people to this country; water, scientifically applied, will keep them here. Look at Riverside. And we are at the primer stage only. We are way behind the ancients in information on that subject. I learned at school, so did you, that some of the most glorious civilizations flourished in spite of the desert which surrounded them. That was only half a truth. They were great because of it! Why did the Incas choose the desert when their strength gave them the choice of the continent of South America? Why did the Aztecs settle in the desert when they might easily have preempted the watered regions? Then there are the Carthaginians, the Toltecs, the Moors. And one never forgets Egypt!"

"For protection," Rickard gave the slighted question an interested recognition. "Was that not what we were taught at school? The forest held foes, animal and human. Those nations grew to their strength and power in the desert by virtue of its isolation."

"Superstition!" retorted the man with the tie. "We are babes at the breast measured by the wisdom of the men who settled Damascus, or compared with the Toltecs, or those ancient tribes who settled in northern India. They recognized the value of aridity. They knew its threefold worth."

"An inherent value?" demanded the college-bred man, turning from the window.

"An inherent value," declared the exponent of aridity.

"Will you tell me just what you mean?"

"Not in one session! Look yonder. That's Brawley. When I came through here ten years ago I could have had my pick of this land at 25 cents an acre. They were working at this scheme then—on paper. I was not alive to the possibilities then; I had not yet lived in Utah!"

The train was slowing up by a brand new yellow-painted station. There were several dusty automobiles waiting by the track, a few faded surreys and the inevitable country hotel bus. The platform was swarming with alert, vigorous faces, distinctly of the American type.

The man in the seat beside him asked Rickard if he observed the general average of intelligence in the faces of the crowd below. Rickard acknowledged that he had been struck by that, not only here but at Imperial Junction, where he had waited for the train.

"There is a club in the valley, lately started, a university club which admits as members those who have had at least two years of college training. The list numbers three hundred already. The first meeting was held last week in an empty new store in Imperial. If it had not been for the setting we might have been at Ann Arbor or Palo Alto. The costumes were a little motley, but the talk sounded like home.

The dust blowing in through the car doors brought on another fit of strangling. Rickard turned again to the window, to the active scene which denied the presence of desert beyond.

"The doctors say it will have to be the desert always for me." The stranger tapped his chest significantly. "But it is exile no longer—not in an irrigated country. For the reason of irrigation! It is the progressive man, the man with ideas, or the man who is willing to take them, who comes into this desert country. If he has not had education it is forced upon him. I saw it worked out in Utah. I was there several years. Irrigation means cooperation. That is, to me, the chief value of aridity."

The wind, though still blowing through the car and ruffling the train dust, was carrying less of grit and sand. To the nostrils of Rickard and his new acquaintance it brought the pleasing suggestion of grassy meadows, of willow-lined streams and fragrant fields.

"It is the accepted idea that this valley is attracting a superior class of men because of its temperance stand. It is the other way round. The valley stood for temperance because of the sort of men who had settled here, the men of the irrigation type."

The engineer's ear criticized "irrigation type." He began to suspect that he had picked up a crank.

"The desert offers a man special advantages, social, industrial and agricultural. It is no accident that you find a certain sort of man here."

"I suppose you mean that the struggle necessary to develop such a country, under such stern conditions, develops of necessity strong men?" evolved Rickard. "Oh, yes, I believe that, too."

"Oh, more than that. It is not so much the struggle as the necessity for co-operation. The mutual dependence is one of the blessings of aridity."

"One of the blessings of aridity!" echoed his listener. "You are a philosopher." He had not yet touched the other's thought at the spring.

"You might as well call me a socialist because I praise irrigation in that it stands for the small farm unit," retorted the valley man. "That is one of its flats; the small unit. It is the small farm that pays. That fact brings many advantages. What is the charm of Riverside? It comes to me always like the unreal dream of the socialist come true. It is a city of farms, of small farms, where a man may make his living off his ten acres of oranges or lemons; and with all the comforts and conveniences of a city within reach, his neighbors not ten miles off! A farmer in Riverside or in any irrigated community does not have to postpone living for himself or his family until he can sell the farm! He can go to church, can walk there; the trolley car which passes his door takes him to a public library or the opera house. His children ride to school. His wife does not need to be a drudge. The bread wagon and the steam laundry wagon stop at her door."

Rickard observed that perhaps he did not know anything about irrigation after all! He had not thought of it before in its sociological relation but merely as it touched his profession.

"Not going into soil values, for that is a long story," began the older man. "Irrigation is the answer which science gives to the agriculturist who is impatient of haphazard methods. Irrigation is not a compromise, as so many believe who know nothing about it. It is a distinct advantage over the old-fashioned methods.

"I am one of those who always thought it a compromise," admitted the engineer.

"Better call rain a compromise," retorted the irrigationist. "The man who irrigates gives water to the tree which needs it; rain nourishes one tree and drowns out another. Irrigation is an insurance policy against drought, a guarantee against floods. The farmer who has once operated an irrigated farm would be as impatient were he again subjected to the caprice of rain as a housewife would be were she compelled to wait for rain to fill her washtub. There is no irregularity or caprice about irrigation."

"Wonder how the old fellow picked it all up?" mused Rickard with disrespect. Aloud he said, "You were speaking of the value of the soil?"

"Look at the earth those plows are turning over. See how rich and friable it is, how it crumbles? You can dig for hundreds of feet and still find that sort of soil, eight hundred feet down! It is disintegrated rock and leaf mold brought in here in the making of a delta. Heavy rainfalls are rare here, though we have had them, in spite of popular opinion. Were we to have frequent rains the chemical properties which rain farmers must buy to enrich their worn-out soils would be leached out, drained from the soil. I can't make this comprehensive, but I've a monograph on desert soil. If you are interested I'll send it to you."

"I should like it—immensely," assented the engineer, still amused.

"It explains the choice of the Aztecs, of the Incas, of Carthaginians, the Moors," observed the stranger. "They chose the desert, not in spite of the soil but because of it. I doubt if they were awake to the social advantages of the system, but it was their cooperative brotherhood that helped them to their glory. We are centuries behind them. I'm getting out here—Imperial. If you come up to Imperial look me up. Brandon's my name. I've no card these days!"

"There are several things I want to hear from you," answered Rickard, following brown necktie and pointed beard to the platform. "I'll be sure to look you up. Mine's Rickard."

The breeze which was now entering the car windows had blown over the clover-leafed fields. Its message was sweet and fresh. Rickard could see the canals leading off like silver threads to the homes and farms of the future; "the socialists' dream come true!" Willows of two or three years' growth outlined the banks. Here and there a tent or a ramada set up a brave defiance against the hard conditions of the land it was invading. Rickard leaned out of the window and looked back up the valley which was dominated by the range now wrapping around itself gauzy, iridescent draperies.

"The monument to an effete superstition!" he repeated. "That wasn't a bad idea."

CHAPTER IV.
The Desert Hotel.

He left the dusty car with relief when the twin towns were called. He had expected to see a Mexican town, or at least a Mexican influence, as the towns hugged the border, but it was as vividly American as was Imperial or Brawley. There was the yellow-painted station of the Overland Pacific lines, the water tank, the eager American crowd. Railroad sheds announced the terminal of the road. Backed toward the station was the inevitable hotel bus of the country town, a painted sign hanging over its side advertising the Desert hotel. Before he reached the step the vehicle was crowded.

"Wait, gen'lemen, I'm coming back for a second load," called the darky who was holding the reins.

"If you wait for the second trip you won't get a room," suggested a friendly voice from the seat above.

Rickard threw his bag to the grinning negro and swung onto the crowded steps.

Leaving the railroad sheds he observed a building which he assumed was the hotel. It looked promising, attractive with its wide encircling veranda and the patch of green which distance gave the dignity of a lawn.

"Brandon's My Name."

But the darky whipped up his stolid horses. Rickard's eyes followed the patch of green.

The friendly voice from above told him that that was the office of the Desert Reclamation company. His next survey was more personal. He saw himself entering the play as the representative of a company that was distrusted if not indeed actively hated by the valley folk. It amused him that his entrance was so quiet as to be surreptitious. It would have been quieter had Marshall had his way. But he himself had stipulated that Hardin should be told of his coming. He had seen the telegram before it left the Tucson office. He might be assuming an unfamiliar role in this complicated drama of river and desert, but it was not to be as an eavesdropper.

The heavy bus was plowing slowly through the dust of the street. Rickard was given ample time to note the limitations of the new town. They passed two brick stores of general merchandise, lemons and woolen goods, stockings and crackers disporting fraternally in their windows. A board sign swinging from the overhanging porch of the most pretentious building announced the post office. From a small adobe hung a brass plate advising the stranger of the Bank of Calexico. The 'dobe pressed close to another two-storied structure of the desert type. The upper floor, supported by posts, extended over the sidewalk. Netted wire screened away the desert mosquito and gave the overhanging gallery the grotesque appearance of a huge fencing mask. From the street could be seen rows of beds, as in hospital wards. Calexico, it was seen, slept out of doors.

"Desert hotel," bawled the darky, reining in his placid team.

"Yes, sah, I'll look out for your bag. Got your room? The hotel's mighty sure to be full. Not many women yit down this a-way. . . . All the men mostly lives right heah at the hotel."

Rickard made a dive from a swirl of dust into the hotel. The long line he anticipated at the desk was not there. He stopped to take in a valley innovation. One end of the long counter had been converted into a soda-water bar. The high swivel stools in front of the white marbled stand, with its towering silver fixtures, were crowded with dust-parched occupants of the bus. A white-coated youth was pouring colored sirups into tall glasses; there was a clinking of ice; a sizzling of siphons.

"That's a new one on me," grinned Rickard, turning toward the desk where a complacent proprietor stood waiting to announce that there was but one room left.

"With bath?"

How will Hardin receive the man who comes to supplant him and how will Hardin's wife receive the man who once had told her of his love and then, torn by doubts, had run away from her expectant eyes? These are questions that worry Rickard, but he is not left long in doubt. Get the answer, with Rickard, in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

GOT WEARY OF "FLU" TALK

Visitor to Indianapolis Very Much Fed Up With Conversation Relating to the Epidemic.

L. B. Andrus of Grand Rapids, Mich., chief of the Merchants Heat and Light company, is laboring under the impression that some "Hoosier jinx" was trailing him Wednesday evening.

While taking dinner at a hotel he was surrounded by delegates to the casket manufacturers' convention. After hearing them discuss their business, which discussion naturally had many references to the influenza epidemic, he concluded it was no place for him.

As the evening rolled on, he began debating with himself the question whether the epidemic was going to get him, so he decided to take a Turkish bath. He had only been there a short time when a sick-looking individual came in, and in a conversation with Mr. Andrus said that he had only recently got over a severe case of the influenza, and he had been advised that a Turkish bath would get the poison out of his system and assist him to recover more rapidly.

When he was talking with this man, another man came in sneezing and coughing and inquired of Mr. Andrus whether he thought a Turkish bath would prevent a fellow from getting a bad case of the influenza.

By this time Andrus said to the attendant: "Get me out of here as quickly as possible. I have given about as much time as I care to presiding at the flu conference in Indianapolis."—Indianapolis News.

Worry Spoils Everything.

More mistakes are induced through worry than any other cause in the world. We fret ourselves into a frame of mind that induces just what we wish to avoid. Go about your work carefully and with faith in your own ability. If you fail today, have faith that tomorrow you will do better. Do not let the little foxes of worry "spoil the vines" of honest endeavor.

Where Proud Man Fails.

The average man can do almost everything or, at least, he thinks he can, but we have yet to see the first one capable of wheeling a baby buggy straight with one hand.

SAW HUMOR OF THE SITUATION

Commanding Officer, Dreaded as a Martinet, Proved He Was Not Altogether a "Bear."

There is a certain major-general in the A. E. F. who is a great stickler for discipline and military forms. Most generals are that, but this one is a regular martinet. The soldier who fails to salute and to "snap it out" when the general is around is in for an extended spell of that intensive form of culinary labor known as "kitchen police," or for something worse.

One afternoon the general was driving along when his car met a soldier on foot. The enlisted man stared hard at the vehicle and its august passenger, but made no move to extend the required courtesy.

The general was indignant. He ordered his driver to stop and hailed the plodding private in his best military voice.

"What do you mean by failing to salute me?" he roared.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I didn't know you were a general," apologized the soldier, standing at attention.

"You didn't know I was a general, eh? Well, didn't you see those two stars on my car? Don't you know what two stars mean?"

"Yes, sir, I know what they mean. They mean that you have two sons in the army," said the "buck."

The general told this story himself that evening at the staff mess and now his aids and the other staff officers know that he isn't such a "bear" as they had thought him.—Exchange.

Fine Mental Exercise.

The finest mental exercise we can think of is the practice of doing that which you dislike to do. If you will switch from kicking yourself every day into doing certain things that you must do, to going at them with a relish and a vim, you will be surprised at the difference it will make in your disposition.

Had a Reason.

"What makes you so sleepy around the office?"

"It's my sense of duty, boss."

"Huh?"

"I lie awake too much at night thinking about my work."

"Tote" Philosophy.

Always carry a little philosophy about with you. A gilded searchlight is of little account to the big auto stuck in the mud.

Contest in Crimes.

Statistics proving that the states of the West and middle West are veritable hotbeds of burglary, as compared with eastern states, may be found in the widespread reports of robberies committed, through interchange of crime tabulations for the past year. Illinois stands far and above all other states in the reports of 1,156 burglaries, selected at random from more than ten times that number of robberies committed which were covered partly covered by insurance. Missouri is second on the list with 75; Pennsylvania third, with 72; Ohio fourth, with 66. Judging from western methods employed by burglars who have made big hauls in and around New York in the last few weeks, burglary insurance underwriters believe there has been a strong influx of western crooks to that part of the country, and that New York city is developing the biggest crime wave in its history.

Cure Bent Backs by Suggestion.

Suggestion plays a great part in the cure of physical ills of soldiers. According to Lieut. Col. A. F. Hurst, all men suffering from bent backs can be cured by persuasion and re-education.

The patient is told that his posture is a bad habit formed when his back was painful. He is asked to stand with his back to a wall, with his heels touching it. His shoulders are then gently pushed back till they touch the wall.

In most instances the soldier finds that in a few minutes he can stand erect without support, and after walking a few times in the same posture his cure is complete.

Of No Consequence.

The other day, since so many young people were called for to help on farms, one boy, who was willing and eager to help but wholly unacquainted with farm work was assigned to a farmer who was extremely careless in giving directions as to the work to be done. One day he told the boy to "grease the wagon." An hour later the boy came in and said: "I've greased every part of the wagon except the sticks that the wheels turn on. I didn't bother with them. They don't show much!"

Success Is a Matter of Alertness.

The fact that many people are ambitionless—content to take things as they come—makes it easy for the ambitious man or woman to get ahead. You can be a leader if you become alert.

Man Is the Great Listener.

Girls with ugly ears cover them with little knots of hair, but man's ears must stand out before the world and take what is coming to them.—Toledo Blade.

Between Battles.

One of our boys was talking with one of the Frenchies in the trenches. He asked the French soldier where he lived. The Frenchman pointed the direction and mentioned a village nearby. When asked if he went home often he replied: "About twice a week." "Oh," said the American lad, "then you commute on the war, don't you?"

No Umpire.

"Are you in favor of protection or free trade?"

"It's a delicate question," replied Senator Sorghum. "There is a difference of opinion among my constituents as to which I really favor. And I don't propose just now to break in and try to decide any disputes."

The Meaning.

"I heard Anna mutter to herself that she was going to face the trouble and make it the subject of thorough reflection."

"I guess you heard her say that when she was looking in the glass at an unbecoming hat."

Still Waiting.

"Gone out of literature?"

"Not entirely. I got a job in a shipping room marking packing cases."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Full Knowledge.

Sister Mary—"Father, what is a Colt revolver?" Little Brother—"I know, sis; it's a little horse pistol."

Not the Same.

He—"Here is a highly interesting article on the Basques." She—"Oh, they went out of style ages ago."

When it comes to lying about suits, some tailors can discount some lawyers.

Age before beauty—the century plant.

Beaten at the Start.

A fellow said to a famous sprinter: "I'll race you and beat you if you'll let me choose the course and give me a yard's start."

"Fifty dollars to one that you don't," said the sprinter, confidently. "Name your course."

"Up a ladder," said the challenger.

Located.

"What's become of the old-fashioned man who used to push a perambulator about the streets?"

"I saw him the other day."

"What was he doing?"

"He was cranking his flivver while his wife held the twins."—Birmingham Age-Herald.